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ABSTRACT

Discussed in the speech on criteria in the public education of the severely handicapped are historical developments leading to the current situation, the kinds of developing structures emerging in special education, the question of criteria and its ramifications, and major tasks to be accomplished. Identified are four historical stages in special education: (1) the organization of residential schools in the 19th century, (2) the development of a few community prototypes in the early 20th century, (3) the quantitative explosion of services 1945-1970, and (4) the current period which is seen to be one of negotiation for more integration for exceptional children in both the public schools and the community. Mainstreaming is stressed as the dominant historical trend. Described are four local programs to provide support services to regular teachers whose classes include exceptional children. Five criteria for placement are considered which include the instructional decision being made on evidence of advantage for the individual and not on the institutional difficulties associated with placing the child in the mainstream or another particular setting. Finally, the author expresses his preferences for special education which include decategorizing both children and teachers so that the highly competent "special educator" would receive funding and children would receive individualized instruction based on educational needs rather than handicapping condition. (DB)

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Criteria in the Public Education of the Severely Handicapped

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An address to the
Saskatchewan Federation -
Council for Exceptional Children
Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon
November 2, 1973

by

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Dr. MacKinnon has asked me to talk about "criteria" in the public education of the severely handicapped. I take it that we need not include criteria for deciding whether severely handicapped children should receive public education. The litigious actions of parent groups in the United States have moved from proverb to court order the right of every child to education. Although directives favoring the advocates of "right to education" and "due process" in the Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. federal court cases have never been fully litigated, we are observing a wave of consent decrees, whereby schools agree to total inclusion - that is, the provision of education for all children. One of the reasons for the settlements by consent, apparently, is that professional educators will not appear in the defense of exclusionary policies.

Thus, when we talk about criteria in the public education of the severely handicapped, I assume that indeed we do have these children all "in"; that we are no longer free to make arrangements by which only some are "in" and others are "out." Of course, it is true that not all severely handicapped children can be managed in the same

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setting or on the same educational diet. My assumption is that we need a variety of settings and programs if we are to serve all children. Consequently, it is within the context of a broadly inclusive, but differentiated educational system that the criteria must be discussed.

I have organized my observations on the subject around several main topics:

First, a brief historical statement that may help us to see some of the current developments in a necessary, broad perspective.

Second, a brief description of the kinds of developing structures which are now emerging in our field and which raise the question of criteria.

Third, the question of criteria itself and its ramifications.

Fourth, and last, some of the main tasks before us, as I read the situation.

1. Historical Perspective

The history of education for exceptional children, if told from their point of view, is a simple story of massive neglect, denial, and rejection. For every Laura Bridgeman and Helen Keller, tens of thousands of children with similar or different handicaps were doomed to constricted lives because it was believed that they could not be taught or were not worth teaching. In a sense, the development of special education can be recounted as an assault on this discriminatory attitude. It began in the early Nineteenth Century with a handful of dedicated pioneers such as Gaspard Itard (1774-1838), his student Edouard Seguin (1812-1880), and Maria Montessori, who began the study and training of mentally deficient children; and Samuel G. Howe (1801-1876), who worked with the blind and others whom you can name, I am sure. From these beginnings, formal arrangements for the education of handicapped children have gone through what appears to me to be three stages, and it has recently entered a fourth.

Nineteenth Century: Residential Schools

In the first stage, residential institutions were organized for children who were blind, deaf, or retarded. They became the models and set the dominant early pattern for special education on this continent. The institutions tended to be narrowly categorical in orientation and, since colleges and universities were not yet involved in professional training programs for teaching the handicapped,

teachers were necessarily prepared for their specialized work by on-the-job training. The roles of teachers, therefore, came to be defined categorically in terms of the "blind," the "deaf," or the "retarded."

Residential schools still exist but more and more they are being used to serve only the most profoundly handicapped populations. Many are now on a program of scheduled demissions which will return many persons to more open arrangements in community life.

Early Twentieth Century: Community Prototypes

The second kind of formal arrangement might be called the "Community Prototype" stage. Some distinctive programs for exceptional children were organized in public day schools at about the turn of the century. Leaders in public day schools, aware of the educational programs in some of the residential institutions, went to them for help. In their earliest forms, therefore, the day school programs were dependent on the residential schools for curricula, leadership, the training of needed teachers. Gallaudet College, for example, which served deaf children, started a teacher training program in the 1890's (Craig, 1942), and in 1904, the Vineland Training School in New Jersey began summer training sessions for teachers of retarded children (Hill, 1945).

At their best, the early community programs and the children they served were usually barely tolerated in the schools and the movement developed slowly. For the first half of the Twentieth Century, most handicapped children were in schools for minimum periods only. Some children were forced to repeat grades until they became embarrassingly oversized in comparison with their classmates. In other school systems, "special" classes or "opportunity" rooms were instituted for handicapped children and the labels quickly took on derogatory connotations.

Until comparatively recently, of course, public schools had never seriously tried to serve all children, and especially not those who were difficult to teach. Indeed, most children attended school only long enough to acquire a basic education, during the first decades of this century. Consequently, school systems were not prepared physically, philosophically, or financially to operate far-reaching programs for exceptional children. Special education is costly by definition because of its emphasis on individual problems and needs. When school budgets were limited, as during the Depression of the 1930's, in particular, special class programs were not expanded.

1945-1970: Explosion of Simple Models

The third stage encompasses about a quarter of a century subsequent to World War II. It is what I call the period of "Explosion on a Simple Model."

As if to make up through one large effort the neglect of centuries, a remarkable surge of activities in behalf of handicapped children began shortly after World War II. Our largest states and provinces launched programs on a broad scale to serve the handicapped in the public schools and, at the same time, numerous colleges and universities organized programs to train teachers in special education (News and Notes, 1948). I shall not take the time to detail the characteristics of this period since most of you know them from personal experience. In the United States, the numbers of children served increased more than 600% from 1948 to 1972; and the number of colleges and universities offering training programs increased seven-fold, from about 60 to more than 400. I do not have comparable data for Canada, but I expect the general trends were similar for both our countries.

It should be noted that the sheer quantitative leap in programing for exceptional children between 1945 and 1972 cannot be attributed to any great technological or ideological advances. There were some innovations, such as the development of low-vision and individual electronic hearing aids, but they are of limited importance in understanding the quantitative change. In the main, the period can be said to have been one of rapid development based on simple models of the past. This is not to imply that the two-and-one-half decades were totally barren of new ideas; rather, we find in them the sources of current important trends. A few examples should suffice.

As part of the studies stimulated by President John F. Kennedy and others in the mid-1960's, a great many university-based educators were enabled to investigate developments in the field in other parts of the world and to acquire new perspectives. For example, visitors to the Scandinavian countries encountered what is known as the process of "normalization," that is, strong community structures and support systems set up to deal with handicapped individuals and their problems in their local community environments. Since then, the principle has become an important part of the thinking and planning of American special educators.

The boundary lines of the categories of exceptional children were seriously examined and strong pressures were developed to extend special education services to children still not served. The specific question which was argued most strenuously was whether schools should serve the "trainable" as well as the "educable" retarded.[1]

In the late 1960's, the largest increases in special education enrollments were in the area of "learning disabilities," an area considered by many observers not to be a handicap category in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the area in special

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[1] For the famous debate on the subject between I. Ignacy Goldberg and William M. Cruickshank, see the NEA Journal, December 1958.

education's province was welcomed because it represents a departure from the overly simple medical and psychometric models of categorization, which increasingly have come under attack.

It may be that the single, most important characteristic of that period for the future is that for the first time, diverse programs of special education were consolidated in single institutions; that is, for the first time, in schools, colleges, and many other agencies, children with different kinds of handicaps were brought together or studied under one roof. Thus, it became possible to look at and to work across all categories of exceptionality in children, and to consider their interrelations.

1970's: Negotiating An Integrated Place in the Schools and In Community Life

I believe that it is useful to identify the current period, which began about 1970, as one of negotiation for a more integrated place for exceptional children in both the public schools and the communities in which they live.

Beginning about 1970, with court directives, new legislation, aggressive work by civil libertarians, parents, and some special educators, it became clear that literally all children were to be educated; that their claims for education would be made to their local school agencies; and that boundaries between special education and regular education were to be opened up. We entered the era of zero-rejection, or zero-demision, as I like to put it. The negative funnel of the past, --through which some children were rejected or

demitted from regular schools to special classes, and some from there through various centers to, finally, end-of-the-line institutions was ended, or is in process of being ended.

What I have called, sometimes, the "two-box" theory of special education is dead. According to that theory, education is structured for two populations of children, two sets of programs or classes, two sets of administrators, and financial incentives to inflate the special education side. These structures have become obsolete. What we have, instead, is a continuum of services in the schools, a variety of instructional and administrative arrangements through which special education may be provided. Within this new context, special educators are less consumed in defining and protecting their own special populations and enclaves, and more engaged as part of the total educational system of the community to provide intensely sensitive and individualized education to all children, but with priority for those who show the greatest needs. We have a strong thrust toward providing education for exceptional children in regular programs, with appropriate supports, and to displace children to special settings only for the most compelling reasons. The force for holding exceptional children in regular school settings, and the movement of special educators out of special boxes and into support roles, has become known these days as "mainstreaming."

Some people feel that the reversal of the old funnel and the present preoccupation with mainstreaming is but an oscillation of a giant pendulum swing and that the course will soon be reversed. By my brief historical review, I have tried to make the case for a different view: that the long story - indeed, the total story - of special education has but one theme, one steady trend:the progressive inclusion of exceptional children in the schools. Special education has come from total neglect, through early set-aside arrangements into the schools, and now into regular classes in progressively inclusive ways.

Some special educators believe that the busy period of expansion for their field subsequent to World War II, was, in fact, a sad example of special educators' complicity in perpetuating the rejection of children from mainstream educational structures, and in attaching "child blaming" labels on exceptional children. According to that argument, deviancy labels are given to children who are difficult or inconvenient to teach and, thus, they can be removed from the mainstream and isolated in special classes. It is a parallel of the more general criticism by Szasz (1961) of society's treatment of people who are different.

If one takes a limited view of schools during the period in question, the argument is valid. However, it is easy to overlook one important factor: that for the first time in the history of special

education, stations for exceptional children were built into the schools and the children were made a part -- although a labeled part -- of the total school community. Educators who stress observation, and I count myself among them, believe that the recent rapid expansion of special education in the schools, even in a largely "set-aside" or "two-box" form, was a necessary transition to the more complete integration of exceptional children in the regular school structures.

Discussions of this kind, however, have become somewhat academic because of what might be called the general "mainstreaming" trend in our society. It is noticeable in many fields of human service other than education, especially in mental health and social welfare. In the field of mental health, the rapid development of community psychiatry and psychology epitomizes the mainstreaming effect. Where, in past years, large numbers of therapists served individual patients in isolated clinics, therapeutic help to prevent the emergence of serious problems is now given to troubled persons through the development of support systems and institutions at the community level. Dr. Gerald Caplan, Director of the Harvard Laboratory of Community Psychiatry, illustrated the trend in his call:

> ...for the community psychiatrist to start by getting firsthand knowledge of a problem through diagnosing and treating emotionally disturbed individuals; then he should become a consultant and educator to enable other caregivers to handle such cases; later, he should consult with

> organizations so that they may develop policies and programs for the prevention and control of these disorders.... (Caplan, 1972)

One assumption in the psychiatric mainstreaming movement is that:

> ...much of what we consider to be mental disorder is both socially determined and defined. The major faults of society lie not with its people but in its systems, and this premise is basic....(Dorken, 1971)

A different argument for the development of community psychiatry and psychology can be read in the position of Albee (1959). He pointed out, some years ago, that the helping professions simply could not expect to grow sufficiently to meet all the therapeutic needs of the population through the individual treatment mode.

Each of the arguments raised in the field of mental health has been paralleled in the field of special education. Trippe (1971), argued the social determiner position. Gallagher (1968) demonstrated that "We can't get there from here;" that is, that we would not be able to supply the needed specialized teachers for major categories of exceptional children for at least the forseeable future if practices of the 1960's were simply extended.

Mainstreaming has become the single most conspicuous trend in the field of special education. In a recent open-ended survey which I conducted for the Council for Exceptional Children, special educators

were asked to list the changes that they anticipated in the field for the next decade. Mainstreaming was listed more often than any other single topic.

I believe that at its worse, the mainstreaming trend is a cruelty if no decent arrangement is made to retrain personnel, reorder facilities, and monitor carefully the progress of the children. At its best, the trend permits the thrilling discovery that schools indeed can accommodate exceptional pupils with a minimum of displacements, and they can become part of the broad, community support structures for children.

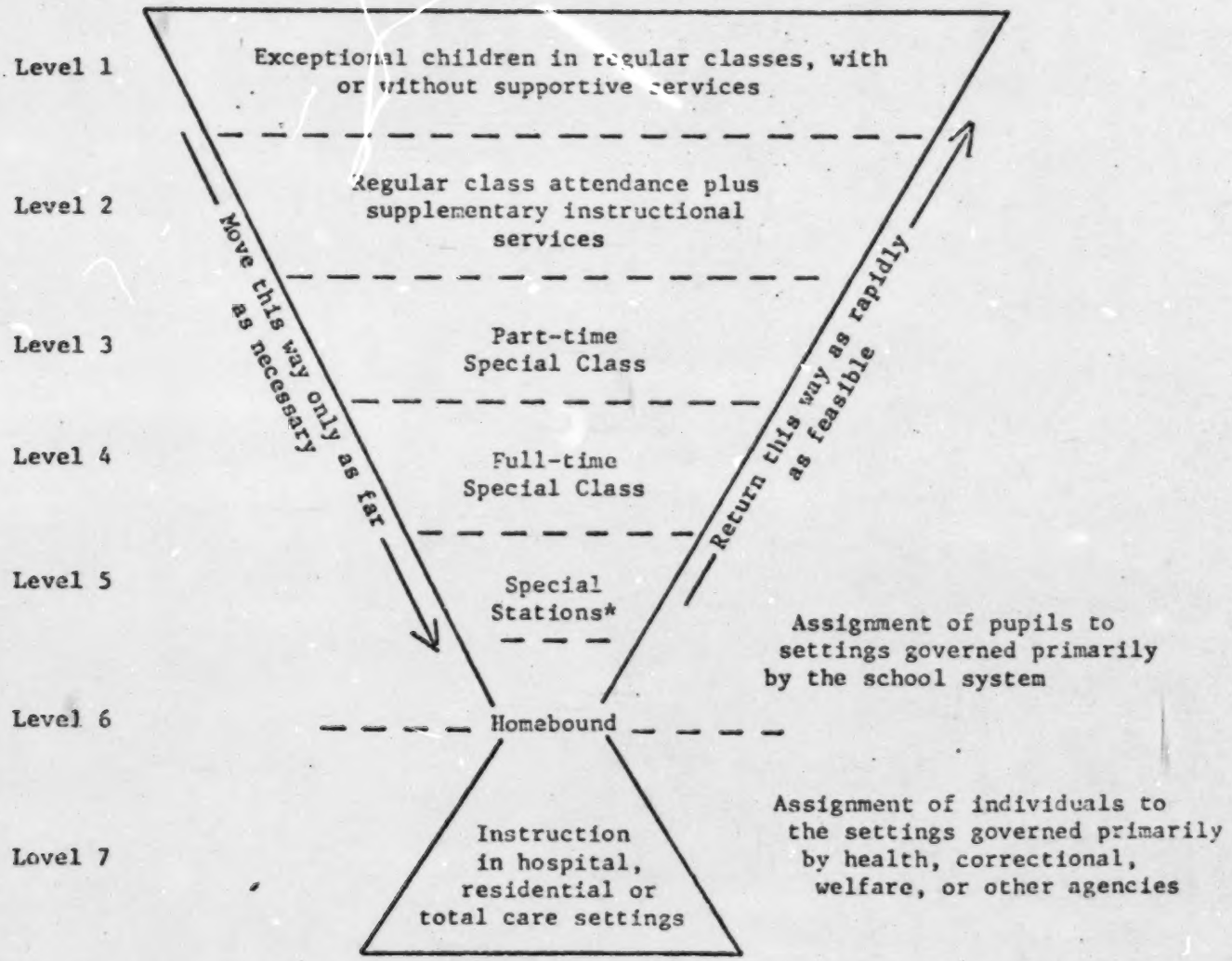
2. Emerging Structures

Increasing numbers of special educators now think of their field as involving a broad continuum or cascade of instructional and administrative arrangements that ranges from regular class placements; to regular placements with consultation, or resource teacher or itinerant teacher help; to part-time special classes, full-time special classes, local day schools, regional centers, residential schools, and hospitals. The orientation is to provide services with the least possible displacements of children from the community mode. Figure I is a schematic representation of the continuum, using a version adopted from Evelyn Deno by the CEC Policies Commission. Let us take a look at the cascade,

FIGURE I

The Cascade System of
Special Education Service

- after Evelyn Deno


Level 1
Exceptional children in regular classes, with or without supportive services
Level 2
Regular class attendance plus supplementary instructional services
Level 3
Part-time Special Class
Level 4
Full-time Special Class
Level 5
Special Stations*
Level 6
Homebound
Level 7
Instruction in hospital, residential or total care settings
Move this way only as far as necessary
Return this way as rapidly as feasible
Assignment of pupils to settings governed primarily by the school system
Assignment of individuals to the settings governed primarily by health, correctional, welfare, or other agencies

*Special Schools in public school systems

trying to sense not what is static, but, rather, what the trends might be. Let us start with what is moving or changing, because I assume you are familiar with the basic concept. Let us start with regular classes.

The basic element, Level I, in the continuum or cascade is the regular classroom. The idea is to accommodate exceptionality there whenever feasible. Sometimes regular teachers will manage the situation on their own; more and more frequently, however, special educators are offering support services to the regular teacher. Let me tell you about some of the more interesting and promising things going on at this level and at Level II which I have seen and in which special educators are at the forefront.

In Austin, Texas, a regional agency is leading the way in installing Individually Guided Education (IGE) in all schools. IGE is a management system oriented to the individualization of instruction; it was created at the University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center in Education and is being disseminated by the Kettering Foundation. In this system, teachers form clusters or teams that make it possible for each to teach from his special strength; children are organized in broader units than the traditional grade-level; all children are given criteria-referenced tests to specify instructional needs; and so on. At the same time, special

educators in the Austin area have undertaken what they call project SHIFT, wherein they are moving a major part of their work into a support mode for children maintained in the regular units. This is not a case of the total demise of special classes, but the SHIFT is substantial. Special educators are able to make very strong contributions in the change-over of the total school system in both the IGE and SHIFT aspects. Increasingly, mildly and moderately handicapped children are educated in an integrated format and programs for the severely handicapped are incorporated in the schools in ways which seem less remote than before. If you should visit the Austin area, the thing you would see almost as much as the changes in the schools is a massive retraining effort directed to all school personnel -- in after school hours, in special Summer programs, and in numerous short courses.

In Crookston, Minnesota, I recently visited a broad regional program that serves small-town and rural schools; a small central staff supports six subregional lead teachers who, in turn, supervise more than a hundred special teachers. The teachers work closely and systematically with regular teachers to study children at very early stages of their schooling and support them through individual tutoring as necessary. They are using a precision-teaching model that includes Lindsley's computer-based summary and retrieval system. Regular class teachers and regular classrooms work together in every aspect of the program, and changes are evident in the total school

program. With good work at kindergarten and first-grade levels, referral rates at second- and third-grade levels to special education programs are down sharply from those of past years.

In Bloomington, Minnesota, teachers of so-called Learning Disabled children used to work with childhood casualties at the third- or fourth-grade level. But they decided to team up with regular teachers at earlier levels to see if some of the learning problems could be prevented. The logic was simple: If special forms of instruction helped at the fourth-grade level, why not provide them earlier and try to save children from long periods of failure. Results have been positive and dramatic. Incidentally, fewer children seem to need labels. One of the very practical problems faced in this situation concerns the availability of special education funding. We have gotten ourselves into a situation in which there is a financial disincentive for preventive work.

Many other situations could be described in which the regular educators are becoming more resourceful in dealing with exceptionality. In some states, new directives require all teachers to have preservice training in exceptionality. More promising, I think are situations in which special educators are teaming up with regular educators and making every day an on-the-job training session.

Please note that the situations I have described are not the simple returns of children to regular classes; instead, they are examples of new forms of collaboration among special and regular

educators. Problems are addressed in more open ways than in the past, and the old simplistic starting points of the child-in-category and special education in special enclaves have been rejected.

Let us look at some additional changing situations that affect still other levels of the continuum or cascade.

In Houston, Texas, some 60 school psychologists have given up their work as clinicians; they have abandoned the long lines of waiting children referred to them by teachers. Instead, the school psychologists have organized Teacher Development Centers to which regular teachers can come for training to handle the problems of children in their classrooms. In related developments, hundreds of former special class teachers have become diagnostic teachers or learning facilitators working in teams in school buildings. Children are no longer referred out of a building by their teachers. If a child's education is proceeding badly, his teacher joins a team of reoriented and retrained educators in his own building to make necessary studies and to redesign programs. The further referral of a child to specialists outside the individual building does not represent the identification of a child in any simple categorical sense; rather, it represents a calculated decision that, even with good effort within the building, it is not expected that the child will be well served now, when he or she needs help. They have measured themselves as well as the child and asked for outside help only when it is clear that they aren't "up to" the child's needs. In this situation, the children

who get referred on out are severely handicapped indeed, but--let me stress again--the referral, or the criteria if you wish, reflects characteristics of programs as well as of the child.

Many school districts are changing their special education programs in new and diverse ways. They are organizing more resource rooms and new consultation systems, with much emphasis on the retraining of personnel for changing roles. They also continue to have special classes and school programs at levels 3-4 in the cascade, but usually for a smaller percentage of pupils than before, and only for those who clearly require instructional arrangements which are not feasible in the regular structure.

In this context, programs for severely and profoundly handicapped children are growing rapidly. Current stories sound much like those heard 20 years ago when many school districts moved into the then new and controversial trainable classes. It is possible to do useful work in behalf of the severely and profoundly handicapped and to feel much satisfaction in the process.

Let me sum up explicitly the principles in the examples I have given. There is no such thing as an impervious regular class, regular school, resource room, or special class. Similarly, there are endless varieties of consultative and instructional systems which can be supplied in support of regular teachers. If one starts with the problem of exceptionality and remains somewhat uncontrained by patterns

of the past, it is clear that all institutions have much untapped accommodative capacity if we but organize and commit ourselves for growth. Change and growth occur in families when an exceptional child appears and change is evident in other institutions including schools, as well. I continue to believe that it is useful to think in terms of a continuum or cascade of arrangements, but with the needs of children as the central focus, and the administrative arrangements varying in response to the children's needs. The force in the cascade is in the direction of "progressive inclusion."

3. Criteria for Placement

Let me turn now to my main topic: criteria in the public education of the severely handicapped. So far, I have removed the discussion from any single form of categorizing pupils and programs, but now I want to make five additional points.

1. First, we should not decide upon placement of a severely handicapped child on the basis of a negative or residual strategy. We may have evidence, for example, that a severely handicapped child is likely to have difficulties if he is maintained in a regular class or even in a special class; he may be isolated or ostracized and have other difficulties in such a setting but, there is no indication that a comparable setting will be better. It's not enough to say that

> the child is having difficulty and, thus, to remove him. What we must have is evidence that he will be better off somewhere else.

Perhaps an analogy to the family situation will help. The severely handicapped child is not necessarily served better outside the family just because he presents difficulties within the family.

I find it useful in this context to try to be clear about what "payoff" we're trying to make. For many purposes, it is useful to think of three levels of payoff: society, institutions, and individuals. In some situations in this world societal goals are paramount; institutions and individuals are manipulated as necessary to achieve the societal goals. Even in democratic societies we permit this payoff at times of extreme crisis. But I assume that all of us would reject these ultimate forms of "Sovietization" as a regular thing, and instead, we would say that the good society is one that serves to enhance the development of the individual lives and permits the emergence of largely free institutions.

The main problem, then, comes at the level of institutional vs. individual payoff (see Figure II). Many institutions make selection/rejection decisions on individuals that enhance institutional payoff but are incompatible with the enhancement of individual values. I'm afraid this has been true of the schools as well as most other institutions. For example, we tend to use predictive devices, such as I.Q.

FIGURE II

A Decision Matrix: Who Is Getting Paid?

Who Is Being Paid Off?	Data Required	Type of Decision
Society		
Institutions	Simple predictions - depending mostly on norm-referenced tests or observations on variables that magnify individual differences and correlate with outcomes that have institutional utility.	Selection/Rejection
Individuals	a) Aptitude-Treatment-Interactions (ATI) or b) "Rate" of performance or learning in different systems or c) Domain referenced test results in competency areas or d) Criteria-referenced test results in a task-sequenced hierarchy	Instructional Placement

tests, which are predictive of progress in the schools, to separate our children for special settings. The problem is that the I.Q. does not indicate whether the low-scoring child will do better elsewhere; it only indicates that he is unlikely to do well in regular schools. Just as a high I.Q. predicts success in many institutions or programs but does not help to choose among them, so low I.Q. predicts relatively poor success in many settings but does not help to choose among them. It helps only to help choose those who might be selected or rejected if you have in mind some institutional goal rather than individual service. Our widespread use of norm-referenced tests and correlational predictive procedures in validating them, is a sign of the strong orientation to selection/rejection decisions and to institutional goals, which have permeated the schools.

For purposes of enhancing institutional payoff, it is not enough to use predictive instruments and to make rejection decisions in those instances where the prediction is unfavorable. If we are truly concerned about each child and commit ourselves to making no rejection or demission decisions, a wholly different quality of information about children and their life situations is required. I shall not elaborate on this point here; I have done so elsewhere.[1]

To summarize this first point, in a zero-demission era, one in which we are equally committed to every individual, a placement or

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[1] Reynolds and Balow. Categories and Variables. Exceptional Children, January, 1972. pp. 357-366.

instructional decision must be made on evidence of advantage for the individual and not on the difficulties associated with having the individual in the mainstream or another particular setting.

2. Second, we must always study the child's situation as well as the child himself, because fundamentally what is required is a change in the child's situation, which may not always involve moving the child to a different class or school.

Recently I was asked to react to a plan which would have involved the identification of a large number of exceptional children in secondary schools for placement in a regional vocational school, in which they would be given opportunities to explore a wide range of vocational programs and then to proceed into intensive training. It was a well-meaning and extremely generous program, dedicated to improving opportunities for what were called "special" students.

But from the perspective I'm proposing here, it was a distressing idea. What really required identification was essentially not the children in difficulty but the problems in the regular school vocational programs which were not serving the children well. My suggestion was that in this day and climate, class action suits and all, it would be a mistake to identify so-called special students and remove them to a special setting. I suggested that such a program would

probably have to be taken apart, that they would be embarrassed by it and possibly even subjected to class action court suits precisely in behalf of the class of students they were identifying for special placement.

One of the difficulties in implementing the situation study which I'm encouraging is that we have so few well-developed procedures and skills for this purpose; but there are some approaches which are available and deserve to be better known and more widely used.

The environment is about all we educators have to manipulate in behalf of a child; it's his environment that we can shape to make a difference in his life, so let us study it. Indeed, when a child is in educational difficulty, one of our main calculations must be how rapidly and how well we can change his school situation. Why not make it a policy never to study a child for schooling purposes except within his school rather than in some isolated place, and to study the school situation as well!

3. Third, in setting up criteria, we should do away with so-called referral processes, which suggest a kind of passing on of responsibilities to some distant person or place. Instead of a referral, let us request support on the assumption that the child most likely will stay where he is, except for such adjustments as can be created locally in his behalf.

My friend Rita Grismer tells me that the Minneapolis Public Schools are considering a new policy which would preclude changes in placement during any school year. Thus, when a teacher or others request help, it is not for relief in the form of removing a child from her class, but for assistance in meeting the child's needs within the class.

4. Fourth, whenever possible, have diagnoses performed and decisions made by those who will be required to follow up on the education of the child.

5. Fifth, displace a child to special settings only when it is necessary to control variables in his behalf in such a way that it is impossible in the more natural environment of his community.

You will not be surprised to hear me say, in summary, that there is no empirical basis on which to specify criteria for the placement of the severely handicapped or anyone else in the schools. This is true, in part, because there really is no such thing as a regular class or any other arrangement. There are many different kinds of regular and special educational arrangements, and many of them are in flux. The arrangement of programs for the handicapped always involves a calculation of the modifiability of the child's regular situation to accommodate to him. If it won't or can't come up to his needs, it still may be the case that no other setting will be better. But if, clearly, a special setting can better serve the child, that is where he belongs.

A Personal Statement on Alternatives and Preferences

This final section is a largely personal expression of preferences for goals special educators ought to seek and the instrumentalities they might use. I have tried to consider topics that touch on most of the previously indicated trends, forces, and problems.

The "right to education" principle. Special educators are in the middle of what must be judged to be a truly remarkable event, one with profound philosophic and practical implications. This is the declaration that every child, even the most profoundly handicapped, shall be given formal opportunities to learn as a part of the public education system. Right to education makes no reference to payoff for society or various institutions; the enhancement of the life of the individual is the sole consideration and goal.

Of course, some special educators and many others do not believe fully in the right to education principle. They will resist the difficult steps necessary to achieve full implementation of the principle in programs for the profoundly handicapped. Many educators still believe that education is a privilege, and that children who fail to meet the standards established by school authorities should be demitted.

The education of severely handicapped children takes much time and money, and some educators may feel that such expenditures lessen

the resources which can be spent on other children. There is no evidence to support such a thesis; indeed, it can be argued that improvements in educational opportunities for the handicapped result in enhanced education for other children. In any case, I believe that special educators ought to stretch themselves to the very limit of their powers, at this strategic time, to help achieve an appropriate education for every child in fact as well as principle.

Legislation. The field of special education, moreso in the United States, perhaps, than elsewhere, finds itself increasingly hamstrung by a system of categorical funding and accounting. The "categorizing" and "labeling" of children, as presently practiced in special education, is largely unnecessary and self-defeating. The public outcry against the practice is mounting rapidly. The key practical changes required are in legislation and regulations at both federal and state levels. In a more fundamental sense, of course, the problem is conceptual, and getting a "turn around" on basic concepts in the field may prove to be the most challenging problem of all.

One relatively simple way to begin working our way out of the problem is to make the highly competent "special educator" the unit on which special state and federal financial aids are paid, rather than to activate special aids on the unit basis of the child-in-category. As long as incentives are created for putting children on rosters of the "handicapped," we will continue on the self-defeating

journey. Shifting aids to "specialized personnel," letting them open ways to serve children who need highly individualized programs, should put special education into a new position in the urban communities where it is now in bad repute. Along with the shift in aids to a personnel unit, government agencies can, of course, require carefully framed programatic plans by which the personnel will be used.

This argument for the demise of categorical aids is directed only to their narrowest forms. In a broader sense, categorical funding for special programs seems essential for the forseeable future. There are those who will wish to preserve narrowly categorical aids and the present child-in-category accounting systems, but their narrow perspective, which permits special educators to stay in the bounds of the traditional categories and to excuse themselves from many of the difficult problems of education in urban ghettoes, Indian reservations, and elsewhere, is not, I believe, a viable alternative for the future; unless, of course, one wishes to see the field defined in terms of only the most severely and profoundly handicapped.

A Broader Responsibility. An alternative to the narrow concept of special education and a corollary to the point of view favoring decategorization, is for special educators to move aggressively on a broader front. Following are some of the domains in which special educators might well make a contribution: (a) installing systems for individualizing instruction for all children; (b) improving the education of minority group children through the application of individualized instructional systems; (c) forming new coordinating structures with fields such as "remedial reading"; (d) establishing

support systems for children with unusual needs so that they may be retained in "mainstream" situations and yet receive proper instruction; (e) leading the way in strengthening research and development activities in education in the context of the needs of exceptional children; (f) leading the way in self and institutional development by launching retraining and program redesign activities of broad character. In urging this broader mission, my assumption and belief are that special educators have a contribution to make in all of these domains. A further assumption is that if the field does not move on this broader front, it will increasingly fail to draw energetic and able young people to its ranks; it will also fail for itself, and for the children it presumes to serve, to be an actively and broadly engaged element in our open society.

Shared authority. One of the clear messages coming out of much of the social change which has occurred in America in recent decades, is that the basic policies of institutions serving people should be and shall be amde by the people affected. On this basis, college students have asserted their roles in higher education, welfare recipients, theirs in welfare agencies, and parents, their rights to influence local school policies. In special education, the concept of shared authority is also being implemented at the level of decisions affecting individuals - in the form of "due process" procedures. Special educators have had extraordinary opportunities to work with parents individually, and in groups, and presumably they are in the position to help lead the way in developing school-wide systems to

provide room for the participation of all persons who may be affected by the systems' decisions. Assuming that one believes that authority for basic policy formulation ought to rest with those effected by the policies - and not everyone sees this as a positive value - then special educators have the basis for leading the way in creating new systems for structuring school policies and operations.

Let me mention in passing, a further domain in which much challenge exists, that is, to refashion the relations between local schools and institutions of higher education. Certainly, a major problem for all of us is to upgrade our skills and insights. Institutions of higher education do not have all of the answers, but they have some of the necessary resources. By creating a collaboration for problem solving, perhaps these resources can be brought into a constructive support mode to help solve the difficult new problems in our field.

In the main the massive retraining efforts which are needed will have to be made in the inservice rather than the preservice mode. This is true for a variety of reasons, among them, that many schools are now oversupplied with teachers for a declining general child population. We will not make change readily through efforts directed to preservice personnel. On the contrary, as indicated in the remarkable Lord James of Rusholme study in England, there are marvelous opportunities and very great needs to strengthen inservice education activities for teachers and other school personnel.

Two Broad Alternatives

Taken together, and on the positive side, the above mentioned elements and the problems I've posed comprise a broad agenda for the future of special education, one that will stretch the imagination and energies of everyone involved. Taken together, but on the negative side, special education has the alternative of a narrowly defined future, serving only the distinctly handicapped with special supports for special enclaves. The fact is, I think, that most of society, including most general administrators and leaders in education, see special education in its narrower versions and have little sense of the broader mission it might perform.

But some general educators and many special educators do see the importance of epening up the enclaves, and of joining the larger effort to serve all children. The severely handicapped need not be neglected as special education opens up and extends its engagements with regular education and the community at large. Indeed, as special education spreads its involvements in broader domains, understanding and opportunities for the severely handicapped should expand correspondingly. If we do not serve all of the handicapped we cannot serve effectively those with the most severe problems, for they will seem like remote visitors in the school and community scene, instead of as individual human beings seeking to create options in their lives through awarenesses and skills at whatever levels they can be achieved. If all children are served well in a full cascade of arrangements, there is a chance for building healthy attitudes and useful programs for all children.

Decisions are being made every day in many places and at many levels on how special education will proceed--in narrow categories or on a broader front; on the extent to which special education will join in efforts for the broad individualization of instruction; on the ways "due process" requirements will or will not be implemented in the schools; on the ways new legislation will effect program development; on the ways roles of special educators will be defined in new certification standards; and on many other topics.

Even the biologists concede that "the new evolution" could be the product of human awareness and decision, rather than of simply blind forces and trends. An unusual set of opportunities is present for special educators at this time to influence their future and that of the children they serve. Hopefully, their decisions will be equal to the challenge.

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